



# ***EXPLORING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET***

## **FACILITATOR GUIDE**

### **SESSION OVERVIEW**

This 45 to 60 minute session explores practical methods to find and pursue job leads. It delivers hands-on activities that prepare students to interact with potential employers.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will be able to identify sources of job leads.
2. Students will be able to assess events, news items and information about the labour market.
3. Students will be able to identify members of their network and understand how to approach their network in pursuit of work.
4. Students will be able to request and conduct an informational interview.

### **MATERIALS**

Hand Out 1 – First Things First

Hand Out 2 – NEWSFLASH

Hand Out 3 – What is a Network?

Hand Out 4 – Informational Interviewing

Hand Out 5 – Thank you notes

Advanced Techniques for Work Search, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry



# EXPLORING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

## OVERVIEW AND TIMELINES

Introduction – First Things First	5 Minutes
NEWSFLASH	10 Minutes
What is a Network?	15 Minutes
Class Network	15 Minutes
Informational Interviewing	15 Minutes

## ACTIVITIES

### INTRODUCTION – FIRST THINGS FIRST

Distribute **First Things First Hand Out**. Read through ***Did You Know*** and ***First Things First*** sections with the group.

### NEWSFLASH

Distribute **NEWSFLASH Hand Out**. Break students into groups of between three and five to brainstorm the ***Newsflash***. Have students identify all stages of this venture for potential work including planning, construction and operations. See Top Up List For Facilitators. Allow students approximately ten minutes for the ***Newsflash*** scenario. Compile and report results from the entire group on the whiteboard.

#### **Top Up List for Facilitators**

**Design:**

*Architects, their assistants and staff, project managers, construction supply sales, and community planners*

**Construction:**

*All trades, skilled laborers', roofers, drivers, safety officers*

**Professional Services:**

*Lawyers, accountants, advertising, health and safety services, cleaning*

**Operation:**

*Lifeguard, sports coaches, facilities maintenance staff, janitors, power engineers, facilities administration staff, concession workers, childcare workers*

**Complementary Businesses:**

*Hotel desk clerk, housekeeping personnel, waitresses, news coverage and media, specialty products related to events (e.g., t-shirts, hats, pins)*



# EXPLORING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

## WHAT IS A NETWORK?

Distribute **What is a Network? Hand Out**.

Briefly emphasize the value of a network in seeking out potential work.

Members of your network are usually people you know well, who might give you information, or introduce you to someone else as you look for work.

Have students organize their own network by writing down the names of the people they might speak to, placing them in the networking diagram.

Let students know that speaking to people about work is not always easy, so preparing a script can take some of the anxiety away.

Have students complete the networking script available based on their own industries of interest.

Remind students that anyone can be a valuable member of their network; never underestimate the connections a person might have.

## CLASS NETWORK

Select four of the following suggested occupational clusters on the whiteboard, leaving room to fill them in!

Use categories appropriate to your group.

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Oil and Gas</i>            | 6. <i>Construction or Trades</i> |
| 2. <i>Food Service Industry</i>  | 7. <i>Manufacturing</i>          |
| 3. <i>Information Technology</i> | 8. <i>Travel and Tourism</i>     |
| 4. <i>Health Care</i>            | 9. <i>Teaching</i>               |
| 5. <i>Agriculture</i>            | 10. <i>Entertainment</i>         |

Ask students to think about the people they might know who work in any of these four categories and share the occupational titles of these people.

Compile the list on the whiteboard and be sure to remark on how broad the occupational knowledge is, just in that classroom!



# EXPLORING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Distribute **Informational Interviewing Hand Out**. Define informational interviewing. It may be valuable to refer to the “Getting the Goods” Pick Up and Go Kit that focuses on research.

***Interview an employee or business owner in a line of work that interests you to gather information about the work.***

Demonstrate the connection between networking and informational interviewing by illustrating a line of communication as follows.

1. *Spoke to sister Susan about work in grocery stores . . .*
2. *Checked back in a week and Susan referred me to her friend Josee whose mom, Mrs. Jones, is a manager at XYZ Grocery.*
3. *Contacted Mrs. Jones for an informational interview.*

Briefly discuss the values of informational interviewing:

- Opportunity to see and experience the workplace
- Meet and evaluate employer and workers
- Get first hand information about that work
- No pressure, just an exchange of information, so no anxiety
- A chance to make a great first impression
- Get information about the skills and training employers are seeking
- Get an impression of the employer before you apply for work

Read the ***quick tips*** from the **Informational Interviewing Hand Out** with the group; ask for any additional experiences that the students may have had during their own work searches.

Have students prepare an individualized script to request an informational interview.



# ***EXPLORING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET***

## **THANK YOU NOTES**

Thank you notes are a good way to let people know how much you appreciate their support, help or consideration. It is important to thank people who assist you with your job search by providing information, ideas, job leads, invite you for an interview and agree to supply a verbal or written reference. Thank you notes can be done through small cards, stationary or e-mails.



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

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### Did You Know . . .

- Less than 20% of jobs are advertised in the want ads of the newspaper.
- Most jobs are found through personal networks.
- You will probably spend 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year at work, until well past your 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. With that many hours spent at work, think about picking a field of work that satisfies you, that you find meaningful!
- It is important to gather as much information as possible to make positive decisions about your potential work so that it is a close “match” with your requirements.

### First Things First

What kind of work do you want to find? What are the skills required for that kind of work? Which companies hire that position? The first step is to gather information about work. Some sources of information include:

- Newspapers – don’t stop at the want ads, watch your local business section for information about local businesses
- Chamber of Commerce – check for the length of time that a business has been involved, their growth and activities in your community
- Business and Trade Organizations – attend conferences, trade shows or networking events, try to ask as many questions as possible
- Yellow Pages – read the Yellow Pages for an idea of how many employers are in your industry of choice
- Television – watch local television for advertisements from employers, news items about your area or trends affecting your industry
- Internet – check out web sites about companies, search industries and products
- Networking – talk to people you know about your field of choice
- Informational Interviews – visit employers in your field of choice, asking questions about their business and their work

**We will get into some detail about a few of these sources of information – responding to current events, networking and informational interviewing!**



## NEWSFLASH

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It is important that you can respond to current events and news stories to discover where work exists. For example:

A 1.3 million dollar recreation complex is given construction approval by the community. Ground breaking will occur July 1. This complex will include skating and curling rinks, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. It will offer facilities for community gatherings and events. What work will be created by this venture?

*Design Stage (who will be hired to plan, design and acquire permits?):*

*Professional Services (what services will this venture require?):*

*Construction Stage (think of all the levels of construction, trades and suppliers):*

*Operation and Maintenance Stage (the facilities staff, administration, coaches and maintenance personnel):*

*Complementary Businesses (think of the businesses that serve this business, or its patrons, for example, during a large swim meet):*

**Try to generate 50 different types of work in this exercise!**

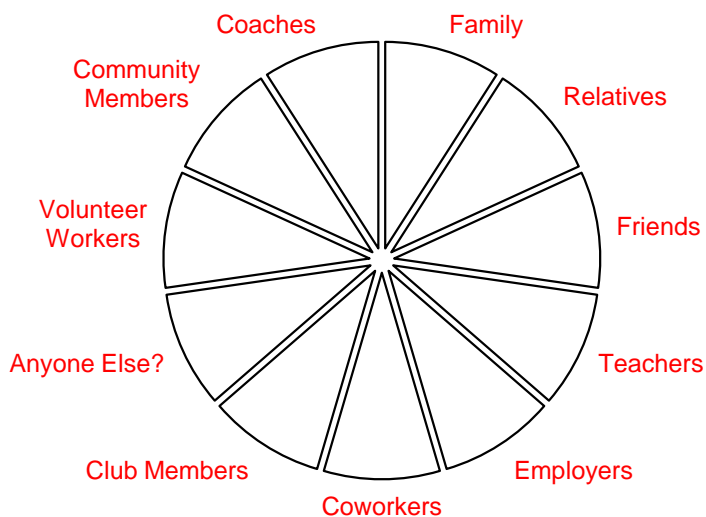


## WHAT IS A NETWORK?

A network is comprised of the group of people you know and who know you. Some of these might include:

- Family and relatives
- Classmates, friends and their families
- Former employers and coworkers
- Volunteer workers
- Club members
- Teachers and coaches

### Fill in the Details of Your Network!





## WHAT IS A NETWORK? – Continued

Speak to the people in your network. Let them know you would like to find work and what kind of work that is. Speak to them often and regularly. There are three questions that are important to ask.

Here is a sample script:

1. *I want to find a job working outdoors, perhaps with a landscaping company or a golf course as a lawn mower. What information do you have about this area of work?*
2. *Who do you know in this kind of work that I might speak with?*
3. *Who else do you think I should speak to?*

People may not immediately know the answers to your questions. Be sure to ask again, after a week has passed, to see if they have thought of anything. Give people an opportunity to think about your idea. Ask again after two weeks!

**Write a script with three questions to ask people in your network.  
Use your own style of language.**

1.

2.

3.



## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

After you have spoken with the members of your network, you may have found a path to employers in your field of interest. It is now time to approach these employers, asking for a moment of their time to gather further information about their work and businesses. This is not the time to submit a resume, or to ask for a job; instead, just explore the information about the type of work and its characteristics.

*Sample script:*

*Hello, my name is John and I am a Grade 11 student at Lacombe Composite High School. My teacher, Mr. Smith, suggested that I contact you. I understand that you are a manager of a busy restaurant here in Lacombe. I am considering work in the food service industry. I would like to speak with you to gather information about this type of work before I make any important decisions. Would you be willing to give me 10 minutes of your time to answer a few questions about your work?*

If Yes . . . Schedule a meeting.

*Thank you, I look forward to speaking with you!*

If No . . . Get a referral.

*Who do you think I should speak to? Thank you! I appreciate your time!*

**Prepare a script to use as you approach employers.  
Remember to request an informational interview.**

Prepare for your informational interview. Although this is not a “job interview”, it is still very important to make a positive impression in case you wish to follow-up with this company when you get to the work search part of your activities.



## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING – Continued

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### Quick Tips:

- Dress for the best day on that job. It wouldn't make sense to wear a suit to a construction site or a farm, nor would it make sense to wear jeans to an office. Check out the environment beforehand to know for sure what will work the best. Usually clean trousers with a long sleeved button-up shirt are pretty safe. Don't forget the details. Polish your shoes and change to new laces. Those little details make a lot of difference.
- Get a haircut. Wear your hair conservatively and neatly. Avoid trendy styles or over-the-top accessories. You want them to notice you, not your hairdo, which may change significantly in the future.
- Go easy on makeup and jewelry. Facial piercing and tattoos should not be the focal point of your discussion, so leave them out or covered.
- Organize your materials, prepare questions and have notepaper and a pen in a tidy, organized manner. Remember to take your portfolio.
- Be punctual, polite and pleasant to everyone you meet. A smile is a great impression to make!
- After your meeting send a brief thank-you card to let the employer know how much you appreciated their time and information. Keep in mind that thank-you cards are often posted for as long as six months. That is great exposure!

### Potential questions to ask the employer:

- How did you get started in this business?
- Please describe your typical day.
- What do you like best about your work?
- What are the challenges associated with your work?
- Do you work in a team or independently?
- What are the duties and hours?
- What is the dress code or uniform?
- What skills are necessary to be successful in this area?
- What education is preferred for this type of work?
- What does the future look like for this industry?
- Is there much technology or computer-influence in this business?



## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING – Continued

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**Design some questions to ask for your field of interest.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

### **Evaluate**

Now is the time to critically evaluate all of the information and the employers. What has impressed you the most? What work place is most appealing, and why? This is the time to campaign for a position!



## **SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTES**

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September 14, 2008

Dear Mr. Happen:

Thank you for taking the opportunity to meet with me to discuss your company and the customer service position.

I am more excited than ever after this meeting. I really believe that I would be a strong addition to your company and team!

Thanks again,

Best regards,

Carrie Worker